



**Town of Amherst, NH**  
**BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES**  
**Barbara Landry Meeting Room**  
**2 Main Street**  
**Monday, January 24, 2022, 6:30PM**

**1. Call to Order**

Chairman Peter Lyon called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Attendees: Chairman Peter Lyon, Selectman Dwight Brew, Selectman John D'Angelo, Selectman Tom Grella, and Selectman Danielle Pray

Also present: Town Administrator Dean Shankle, Executive Assistant Jennifer Stover, and Recording Secretary Kristan Patenaude

**2. Pledge of Allegiance – led by Bill Stoughton**

**3. Citizen's Forum**

Will Ludt, 3 School Street, addressed the Board regarding a property, 7 Thornton Ferry I, that the Town may be selling. Chairman Lyon explained that the Town does own this property and will be speaking further with the Tax Collector regarding the future of the property. Mr. Ludt noted that, as the B&M Trail runs right near this property, he sees value in the Town keeping at least an easement on the property.

Susan McCarthy, 50 Broadway, addressed the Board regarding confusion with how the Phase IV costs for the community septic system are allocated. Ms. McCarthy noted that the costs do not seem to be consistent with the number of bedrooms at a property. She asked why the cost to a 1-bedroom cottage should be the same as the cost to a 2 or 3- bedroom house. Chairman Lyon stated that he and Town Administrator Shankle are happy to sit down with Ms. McCarthy to further discuss this item.

**4. Scheduled Appointments**

**4.1 Trygve Halverson, update on Town Employee Health Insurance Comparisons**

Mr. Halverson noted that the Town has until February 1, 2022, to accept the proposed rate offer from NH Interlocal Trust, the current insurance provider. He explained that he performed a comparison between NH Interlocal Trust (Harvard Pilgrim Healthcare), Health Trust (Anthem), and School Care (Cigna). After working with NH Interlocal Trust, he was able to work the proposed rate increase down to 8.5% instead of the original 14%. The comparison showed that School Care cannot match the benefits that the Town currently extends to its employees and union. Health Trust has not yet submitted a proposal. He explained that the Town considering other options may have caused NH Interlocal Trust to consider reducing its rates.

Mr. Halverson strongly recommended that the Town sign the currently proposed rate offer with NH Interlocal Trust. The Town can review other potential options for plans through NH Interlocal Trust after as an option in the future. He also explained that Delta Dental, the Town's existing dental insurance, is proposing to reduce its rates by 1.5%, which will lead to a slight savings for the Town.

In response to a question from Selectman Brew, Mr. Halverson stated that the Town can sign with NH Interlocal Trust for this year and still consider other options for the following year.

Selectman D'Angelo asked why the Town should trust NH Interlocal Trust, after it originally stated its rate would be a not-to-exceed 10% amount, then changed it to 14%, and finally are settling at 8.5%.

In response to a question from Selectman Pray, Mr. Halverson stated that the proposed plan through NH Interlocal Trust is identical to what the Town currently has; the only change is to the price for the plan.

Chairman Lyon suggested that a small group get together to discuss other options in the future for both insurance plan options and possible alternative insurance companies.

Town Administrator Shankle noted that the proposed premium return will almost cover the proposed rate increase to the Town.

*A MOTION was made by Selectman Brew and SECONDED by Selectman Pray to move forward with the proposal, as discussed, for the upcoming year, and to form a small group including Selectmen and town employees, after Town Meeting to review this information with an eye to the following year.*

*Voting: 5-0-0; motion carried unanimously.*

#### **4.2 Bill Stoughton, ARPA Presentation**

Bill Stoughton addressed the Board regarding ARPA funds. He explained that Amherst is slated to receive \$1.2M; \$596,000 has already been received, and an additional \$596,000 should be received in June 2022. These funds are to be used for costs incurred from March 3, 2021, to December 31, 2024, only within certain permitted categories. There is no additional permission needed, but the Town must keep track of these funds and submit reports beginning in April 2022.

Mr. Stoughton explained that one specific category, "Lost Revenue Replacement," would give the Town the most flexibility with the least amount of compliance burden. This category is to replace Town revenue that the Federal Government assumes would have been realized without the pandemic. Examples of projects that would fall under this category include road building and maintenance, infrastructure, the provision of Police and/or Fire vehicles, construction of public buildings, and general government/administration/staff expenses. This category can also be used toward a local match for some grants. This category cannot be used to pay down principle or interest debt, as a contingency fund, toward litigation, or for pension fund deposits.

Mr. Stoughton stated that other potential categories include Public Health Expenditures (such as ventilation measures, PPE, vaccination/testing sites, and mental health treatment); Negative Economic Impacts (such as social welfare items); Premium Pay (allowing for additional retroactive pay for essential, in-person, non-exempt workers); and Infrastructure (such as for stormwater or broadband projects).

In response to a question from Selectman D'Angelo, Mr. Stoughton stated that the Town would likely not have been able to justify the entire \$1.2M worth of loss under the original compliance requirements, but this has since changed as a result of the updated requirements.

It was noted that the Board will hold a public hearing on February 7, 2022, to formally accept the ARPA funds as unanticipated revenue. It will then hold a longer discussion as to the possible uses of these funds.

In response to a question from Ms. McCarthy, Mr. Stoughton stated that there are certain improvements that could likely be suggested to the public septic system at the Lake through these funds, depending on requirements laid out by the Town warrants.

## **5. Administration**

### **5.1 Administrative Updates**

Town Administrator Shankle noted that a request was made by a member of the public to submit a petition warrant article for the upcoming ballot. Unfortunately, due to a mistake made, this petition warrant article was not properly submitted in time for the Town's deadline. There is not much that the Town can now do to remedy this situation.

### **5.2 Impact Fees**

Town Administrator Shankle explained that Bruce Mayberry reviewed the Impact Fee models for the school portion. Model A shows the existing 2020 fee basis, under which the single-family fee was computed at \$2.32 per square foot of living area. Model B updates this basis based on (1) capital cost assumptions updated to reflect the latest (FY 21) NH Department of Education allowable costs per square foot per State Building Aid standards; and (2) credit allowances updated with respect to time (present value) using the original model assumptions. With only these changes to the existing model, the school portion of the single-family fee could be assessed at \$3.06 per square foot of living area. Models C and D reflect potential changes if the school bond article passes at Town Meeting and construction of a new school building moves forward.

In response to a question from Selectman D'Angelo, the Board discussed any potential projects currently proposed that could be impacted by this change. Mr. Stoughton explained that there is one potential project which could be voted on by the Planning Board in either February or early March. At the time of approval, the Planning Board locks in the impact fee rate.

It was noted that the Board of Selectmen must submit the proposed revised fee schedule to the Planning Board for review and potential recommendation before adoption. It was agreed that the Board could submit this to the Planning Board for review at its next meeting, February 2,

2022, and then potentially hold a public hearing at its next meeting, February 7, 2022, for review and adoption.

*A MOTION was made by Selectman Pray and SECONDED by Selectman D'Angelo to forward the proposed Model B rate and language, as prepared by Bruce Mayberry, to the Planning Board for review and comment, and to then hold a public hearing on February 7, 2022.*

*Voting: 5-0-0; motion carried unanimously.*

## **6. Staff Reports**

### **6.1 COVID-19 Task Force Update**

Executive Assistant, Jennifer Stover, explained that the most recent updates from the CDC and NH DHHS allow for employees to return to work sooner after exposure to/contraction of COVID-19, with certain caveats. The changes reduce the amount of time out of work from 10 days to 5 days, if the employee agrees to then wear a well-fitting mask for the next 5 days. The COVID-19 Task Force is recommending that the Board update the Town's policy based on these changes. She noted that the Town has purchased a limited number of K95 masks to pass out to employees.

In response to a question from Selectman Pray, Ms. Stover explained that employees who are up to date with their vaccinations and do not have symptoms are allowed to return to work if wearing a mask. It is difficult for Town staff to judge this, as vaccination status records are not available to the Town.

Selectman D'Angelo suggested that the Town policy, along with these proposed changes if approved, be placed on the Town website.

In response to a question from Selectman D'Angelo regarding reimbursing employees for purchasing "well-fitting" masks, if that is to be a requirement of the policy, Ms. Stover stated that the goal is for the Town to provide each employee with 1-2 masks, or for employees to wear their own. Selectman D'Angelo noted that there does not seem to be a reason to require "well-fitting" masks in the policy.

*A MOTION was made by Selectman D'Angelo and SECONDED by Selectman Brew to accept the reduction of the number of days of isolation from 10 days to 5 days, when 1) symptoms are improving , 2) the employee is fever-free for 24 hours without fever reducing medication and 3) the employee is willing to wear a face mask for an additional 5 days when in Town buildings and when not able to social distance outdoors.*

*And to accept the reduction of the number of days of quarantine from 10 days to 5 days when the employee is willing to wear a face mask for 5 days when in Town buildings and when not able to social distance outdoors.*

*And to accept the change of the recommended day for testing from "3-5 days after exposure" to "at least day 5."*

178 *And to accept the change from accepting PCR test results only to accepting the results of an*  
179 *at-home antigen test when scheduling a PCR test is not available, with the note that PCR tests*  
180 *continue to be the most accurate.*

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182 *Voting: 5-0-0; motion carried unanimously.*  
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## 184 **6.2 DPW Salt Budget**

185 Deputy DPW Director, Eric Slosek, explained that salt prices rose in September from  
186 \$49.50/ton to \$72/ton. With the proposed \$120,000 salt budget, the DPW would thus be able  
187 to purchase approximately 1,667 tons. Over the past three years, the Town has averaged 2,050  
188 tons used of salt per year. The Town seemed to have plenty of salt available until the latest  
189 freezing rain events.  
190

191 In response to a question from Selectman Brew, Mr. Slosek stated that the salt shed was  
192 approximately 50+% full at the end of last June. There were approximately 600 tons available  
193 at the beginning of the winter. There are several areas within the DPW budget that could be  
194 used for this potential overage of funds.  
195

196 In response to a question from Selectman D'Angelo, Mr. Slosek stated that the Town may  
197 want to look into increasing its salt budget for future years.  
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## 199 **6.3 DPW – New Forks for Loader (the Board took up this item at this time)**

200 Mr. Slosek explained that the Town's backhoe is currently being repaired. He is considering  
201 purchasing an additional pair of forks that could be placed on the loader. There is a used set of  
202 forks at Chappell Tractor for \$5,500, where a new set would cost approximately \$8,500. An  
203 additional set of forks would allow for flexibility to use these at the Transfer Station or at the  
204 DPW.  
205

206 In response to a question from Selectman Grella, Mr. Slosek explained that the bent rod on the  
207 used forks does not interfere with its operation.  
208

209 In response to a question from Selectman Pray, Mr. Slosek explained that the proposed hot  
210 box purchase will be under budget, and so there will be additional funds available for this  
211 item.  
212

213 *A MOTION was made by Selectman Brew and SECONDED by Selectman Grella to authorize*  
214 *the DPW to purchase a used set of Loader Forks from Chappell Tractor for the amount of*  
215 *\$5,500.*

216 *Voting: 5-0-0; motion carried unanimously.*  
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## 218 **6.4 DPW New Hot Box Purchase (the Board took up this item at this time)**

219 Mr. Slosek explained that a new hot box was proposed to be purchased this year. The original  
220 budget for this item was \$25,000. He received two estimates for a new hot box. He is  
221 recommending one from HP Fairfield that is both simple and works well. There is also a  
222 proposed trade-in for the current hot box of \$300.00  
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A MOTION was made by Selectman Brew and SECONDED by Selectman Grella to authorize DPW to purchase a NEW Falcon 2-ton hot-box from HP Fairfield for a purchase amount of \$15,257.00, with the understanding that the purchase price will be reduced by the trade-in value of our existing equipment presented at the BOS meeting.  
Voting: 5-0-0; motion carried unanimously.

## **7. Approvals**

### **7.1 AP, Payroll, Minutes**

#### **Payroll**

A MOTION was made by Selectman D'Angelo and SECONDED by Selectman Pray to approve one (1) FY21 Payroll Manifest in the amount of \$233,553.81 dated January 13, 2022, subject to review and audit.

Voting: 5-0-0; motion carried unanimously.

#### **Accounts Payable**

A MOTION was made by Selectman D'Angelo and SECONDED by Selectman Pray to approve one (1) FY21 Accounts Payable Manifest in the amount of \$23,235.23 dated January 6, 2022, subject to review and audit. (NH DMV)

Voting: 5-0-0; motion carried unanimously.

A MOTION was made by Selectman D'Angelo and SECONDED by Selectman Pray to approve one (1) FY21 Accounts Payable Manifest in the amount of \$197,499.93 dated January 18, 2022, subject to review and audit. (Vendors)

Voting: 5-0-0; motion carried unanimously.

A MOTION was made by Selectman Pray and SECONDED by Selectman D'Angelo to approve the Board of Selectmen meeting minutes of January 10, 2022, as written.

Voting: 5-0-0; motion carried unanimously.

## **8. Action Items**

The Board reviewed its action items.

## **9. Old/New Business**

Selectman Brew noted that there will be a meeting of the Master Plan Steering Committee tomorrow at 6:30pm at Town Hall.

## **10. Non-Public Session**

### **10.1. RSA 91-A:3, II (b) The hiring of any person as a public employee**

A MOTION was made by Selectman D'Angelo and SECONDED by Selectman Grella to enter into Non-Public Session at 8:43pm.

Voting via a roll call vote: 5-0-0; motion carried unanimously.

A MOTION was made by Selectman D'Angelo and SECONDED by Chairman Lyon to exit into Non-Public Session at 9:07pm.

Voting: 5-0-0; motion carried unanimously.

271 No motions were made, no votes were taken during Non-Public Session.

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273 *A MOTION was made by Selectman Brew and SECONDED by Selectman Pray to adjourn the*  
274 *meeting at 9:08pm.*

275 *Voting: 5-0-0; motion carried unanimously.*

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277 **NEXT MEETING: Monday, February 7, 2022**

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*Selectman Danielle Pray*

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*Date*